

Metric System

period of time. There is no place on the ledger sheet headed "benefits that will accrue" so that you can write off the cost over a period of time. They go from year to year because that is the basis on which they pay taxes.

The Metric Commissioners say at those meetings that industry will absorb the cost and it will not be passed on to the consumer. At the same time the industry people are saying they will not absorb the cost, that it will be passed on to the consumer.

I would like to see this matter brought forward in a bill. The best thing that could happen to metric conversion would be to bring a bill into this House and have it debated. Let us get it out in the open and do something about it. Get it into committee. Put the amendment through.

If the people on the Metric Commission do not know how to write a bill, we will help them. If the Department of Finance does not know how to compensate small people for the cost that will accrue to them as a result of metric conversion, we will tell them how to do it. We have studied this for a long while. I think we have a good handle on it.

Like my colleagues, I become discouraged when I see the government become rigid. They will not move. They say this is the way it is going to be and you will like it or lump it. When I see that happen, I become very obstinate. I can no longer be a person very much in support of metric conversion.

I went into our caucus and pleaded with our members to support metric conversion. Many now ask me what has happened. They remember when I went to caucus and made a long, passionate speech about metric conversion, how we should support it and how great it would be for Canada. I took a lot of abuse for it. I received letters. I will not read them into the record because some are not very nice. However, I did that because I believed in metric conversion. When I saw what the various ministries had done or had not done with regard to metric conversion, I changed my view. I support the principle of metric conversion completely, but I do not support the way the government is trying to implement it. The way they are going about it is regressive.

With regard to the one matter of acres and hectares, we had before our committee representatives from the farming community. They told us that the farmers were all for metric conversion. At the same time, the farmers went to a meeting at the Chateau Laurier. Metric conversion was raised. There was such a violent argument that the chairman of the meeting tabled the matter so that they could get on with other business. In other words, in no way is metrication unanimous.

The hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) and others who have spoken in this debate have quite rightly said that this bill should be sent back to the committee.

Bring in a bill. Let us get it out in the open. Let us debate it. Let us get together with the farm groups to see what we can do to make metric conversion work. Until the government does that, I can assure them that they will have just as tough a time with the other 92 bills as they are having with Bill C-23.

[Mr. Kempling.]

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I would not have again risen to speak about this matter if I did not feel so deeply about it. During the last debate, I spoke about the history of the west. I spoke about the Torrens system which we inherited from New Zealand and described in some detail what it meant to the history of the west. During that speech, the minister responsible for small business pooh-pooed and heckled me. I read that speech tonight for the first time since I delivered it.

There is one tool that parliament has, namely the right to debate. I may be accused with my friends of filibustering the bill, but I will tell them this. If I have to filibuster this bill as long as I am in the House because of what it is doing to the history and tradition of western Canada, I will take the punishment the media pour out for filibustering. I will use every tool of parliament to make sure that parliament works rather than have something rammed down the throats of western Canadians.

This bill is nothing less than parliamentary insemination. They are going to give it to you through a syringe whether you will like it or not. You will have a calf whether you will like it or not. It is the rape of the west.

The opposition has a function. I have read articles, not in the farm papers but in other papers, suggesting that we are debating this bill and holding it up. Let me tell you the truth. We are debating it. We are holding it up.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Paproski: And we shall win.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Woolliams: I hear the interventions. I appreciate that members opposite are worried about the same thing. I am sure in their caucus the little man from the corner, little Jack Horner, is playing with his metric system. He must have told the government members what this means to the farmers and to the city people and about the millions and millions of dollars it will cost the Canadian taxpayer to change over.

I want to talk about the function of the opposition. You first have to look at the term Leader of the Official Opposition, Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

An hon. Member: Who is that?

Mr. Woolliams: Do not worry about him, he will come through. It was only a short time ago that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was away down low in the polls. Polls work like a yo-yo. I agree with the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker)—"poles" are made for dogs.

● (2150)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: But even the law statutes refer to the Prime Minister as "Her Majesty's first minister of the Crown" and to the Leader of the Opposition as "The Leader of Her Majesty's